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Your Childs Land, Every 16th Section

Mississippi Economic Council

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Schools

YOUR Child's Land



EVERY
16th SECTION

A Summary
of

The story of 16th Section School Lands in the
Choctaw Purchase — and how you can help
protect your child's trust fund.

Issued by



COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

P. O. BOX 1849
JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi's Big Problem

Our public schools are in trouble.

Mississippi is not providing children with adequate educational facilities.

Our state is the bottom rung of the nation's educational ladder. Our children deserve better.

Mississippi is not providing equal facilities for Negro children. According to the U. S. Supreme Court ruling as this publication went to press in Mid-December, 1952, separate facilities cannot be maintained unless equal facilities are provided.

These problems must be met now—there is no escape.

In countless meetings in 1951, citizens showed their willingness to face facts. They said they want better schools and they want equal facilities for Negro and white children.

Special Legislative Session

The Legislature at the request of the governor appointed a legislative study committee to get the facts. A special session of the Legislature may be called to solve the public school crisis.

More Revenue Is Needed

The state's school system needs modernization. Reorganization and streamlining will save many millions of dollars. These savings can be used to help provide better and equal facilities for all children.

But This Is Not Enough!

The total need for additional revenue is greater than any savings which come from improved administration.

All present sources of revenue need study for better use.

Sixteenth Section lands are one of these sources.

What Are 16th Sections?

The State of Mississippi was formed out of territory belonging to the State of Georgia.

It was agreed between the United States and the State of Georgia that a full section out of each township in the ceded territory was inherited by the State of Mississippi for the perpetual endowment of its common schools.

This provision was and is upheld by all court decisions from the time of the formation of Mississippi. Sixteenth Section school lands are a trust fund for your children.

Condition of This Trust Fund

The history of "16th Sections" from 1802 until 1952 is complicated and often times confused. But despite lack of care of this trust by many of us, the bulk of the lands remain intact today.

Of the original 824,000 acres, approximately 600,000 acres remain today. Nearly 500,000 of these acres are in the central and south Mississippi pine land belts.

It Now Produces Small Income

In 1949-1950 only \$609,000 was derived from these 600,000 acres.

If you held land for your own child, would you be satisfied with a dollar an acre per year? This, too, is your child's land.

What Is The Potential?

Estimates of **potential** yield if all these 600,000 acres were properly leased and managed, run from \$5,000,000 to \$10,000,000 a year. These estimates do not include possible revenues from oil and gas.

What Is Done to Protect and Increase the Value of 16th Section Lands?

County boards of supervisors and others are increasingly aware of the need to conserve and increase the value of these school lands.

Typical Example of Better Management

In a central Mississippi "brown loam county" a section is managed in this way:

1951

ANNUAL INCOME

Entire section leased for agricultural purposes	\$2,702.55
Mineral lease (including bonus)	1,347.00
Total Revenue	\$4,409.55

Sixty acres are held to grow hardwoods. Only grazing is permitted on this part of the section.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Ask yourself these questions:

1. How many acres of 16th Section school lands are owned by my county school children?
2. How much revenue did my county schools get from their land last year?
 - a. How much from surface leases?
 - b. How much from mineral leases?
 - c. How much from timber sales?
3. Have all the original 99 year leases expired on my county's school lands?
4. Do present leases provide for annual rental payments or lump sum payments?
5. Is the timber on the leases being properly protected and managed for the benefit of my school children?
6. Are short-term leases being made whenever possible?
7. Is the land being managed as I would manage land belonging to my own child?

You can find the answers to these questions in your courthouse.

You must know these answers before you can solve the problem.

STATE-WIDE SURVEY

A state-wide survey by the MEC revealed certain answers. Some of these answers need only local action, others need legislative action. The MEC study headed by Ben M. Stevens, Jr., of Richton was based on an original study made by Mr. Luther N. Davis at Mississippi Southern College, Hattiesburg.

Local Action Is Needed Including:

1. Short-term leases with annual rental payments.

The terms of the lease to follow pattern of privately owned land in a county.

2. Properly managed forestry projects on county school land. Proper cutting of timber on agricultural leases. This timber belongs to the schools, not to the leaseholder.

3. School lands properly abstracted and clearly identified.

4. Annual reports by county superintendent of education and board of supervisors on income received from school lands by townships and leaseholders and dates of expiration of leases.

These remedies can be made locally by you.

More Needs To Be Done

In 1952, H. B. 876 was introduced in the Legislature. The bill carried the endorsement of the Mississippi Association of Supervisors and the MEC. Because of unavoidably late introduction, the bill was not brought to a vote.

H. B. 876 provided in part:

1. Titles to all 16th Section lands to be cleared.
2. Sixteenth Section Lands be classified into four categories:
 - a. Forest lands.
 - b. Commercial property.
 - c. Residential property.
 - d. Agricultural land.
3. Sixteenth Section Lands be periodically reclassified.
4. Lands classified as forest lands not be released except for oil and gas exploration. The lands be placed in forestry projects under the Mississippi Forestry Commission.
5. Funds derived from 16th Section to remain with township.
6. Leases not to be longer than:
 - a. Agricultural - 10 years
 - b. Residential - 50 years
 - c. Commercial - 25 years
7. County superintendent of education to make regular reports on 16th Section Lands.

These are the vital sections of H. B. 876.

What Can You Do To Help?

1. Study the whole problem of 16th Section school lands.
2. Study H. B. 876.
3. Hold group meetings.
4. Talk to your legislator.

If you need further information, contact the MEC, Standard Life Building, P. O. Box 1849, Jackson, Mississippi.

Remember: These lands are a trust fund for your children.

HELP PROTECT THEM

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*—Members of special Sub-Committee on 16th Section Lands

Recommendations in this pamphlet are endorsed by the majority of the study committee, but the controversial nature of the problem prevents unanimity on all issues.

"Your Child's Land" is issued by the Mississippi Economic Council to stimulate constructive action by public and private groups so as to bring about more efficient management of 16th Section School Lands to help finance our public schools.